

Summary Report on Water Resources Management in Sub-Saharan Africa Workshops

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In February 1996, the World Bank sponsored two Workshops in Africa with the theme *Water Resources Management*. The first was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on February 12-15, with 119 participants from 21 countries of eastern and southern Africa and from UN agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The second workshop was held in Dakar, Sénégal, on February 19-22, with 115 participants from 20 countries of western and west central Africa and from external support agencies. The participants included several water sector ministers and senior government officials from African countries, as well as representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

Full proceedings of the two workshops are available from the World Bank. This Summary Report combines the conclusions and recommendations of the two workshops, to present an African perspective on Integrated Water Resources Management.

Workshop Theme and Focus

The high attendance and the evident commitment of all participants to the same objectives make it clear that the Workshop topic is a highly relevant one for all African countries. The aim was to include all the different domains of water resources to obtain as wide a perspective as possible. The issues of sustainability, equity, efficiency and integrated management emerged as critical throughout the continent. Also reflected was the prevalent view that social aims of governments and other sector stakeholders merit as much attention as economic and environmental ones. The focus of the Workshop was "partnership and a broad coalition for promoting more efficient and equitable use of water resources in Sub-Saharan Africa."

The Workshops brought together a range of stakeholders (governments, sector agencies, NGOs, UN agencies and bilateral donors). The aim was to convert the analyses and action-oriented recommendations in the Strategy Paper into results which will improve the livelihood of all Africans. The Workshops' conclusions will influence World Bank thinking on assistance to Africa. In particular, the messages will be taken into

account as the Bank begins to implement the African Water Resources Strategy.

At both venues, the discussions demonstrated convincingly that a New Agenda is needed. The old supply-driven, sectoral approach has been effectively laid to rest. African countries are committed to new imperatives, which will focus on their needs, identified and converted into action programs implemented by them, making maximum use of a wealth of indigenous talent and resources.

The Emerging Imperative

The enthusiasm of the Workshop participants to learn the lessons of the past, but base their future programs on strengths and achievements is captured in a three-part "emerging imperative":

- enthusiasm by African countries to accelerate transition to sustainable and equitable water use;
- country-driven development making use of African capabilities, resources, and experiences;
- cooperation among sectors and among riparian countries, including multi-sector and multi-country programs.

Repeatedly, in both plenary and Working Groups, participants insisted on the positive view, focusing on ways of redirecting available resources and mobilizing previously untapped ones. Impending scarcity and environmental degradation add weight to the acknowledged need to make sustainability a primary objective. The dilemma of limited resources to meet even the high-priority needs of all sectors at the same time makes equity a key issue too. Most importantly, though, the imperative is to ensure that African development policy is put together by Africans for Africans and that its implementation builds on (and continues to build) Africa's indigenous capabilities.

With very few exceptions, Sub-Saharan countries share the waters of international rivers with at least one of their neighbors. There is a strong desire to achieve rational and equitable sharing of the waters and to manage

the river basins in an integrated manner. This poses challenges both for the riparian countries and for the donor agencies seeking to support them. New approaches are needed, which will enable donors to provide support on a multisector and multicountry basis, so as to foster effective joint management of international resources. Out of this "emerging imperative", the Workshop has reaffirmed some important goals for the road ahead.

The Road Ahead

1. Political will and commitment

Government commitment to the changing agenda is crucial to achieving progress.

2. Stakeholder participation at all levels

Active participation of all the parties involved in the development process is now widely accepted as both a route to successful planning and an effective way of mobilizing previously untapped resources from local agencies, communities, farmers, NGOs and the private sector. Any process for involving stakeholders needs to recognize the different needs and potential contributions of men and women, through gender-sensitive approaches in the consultative process and throughout program implementation.

3. Demand management and water conservation

Greater stakeholder participation is a powerful mechanism for raising awareness of the value of water and the need to conserve its quality and quantity. Demand-management approaches using economic instruments, conservation measures, etc, are an important part of strategies to extend the life of existing resources and defer investment in costly new water resources development projects. The old supply-driven approach is no longer an acceptable way to plan and implement projects.

4. Equitable sharing of international resources

The Workshops repeatedly returned to the topic of transboundary water problems - an indication of the high importance attached to it across the continent. Transboundary water sharing is important for all African countries and fundamental to future economic growth in some downstream riparian countries. Participants heard of recent progress both on bipartite agreements and on regional protocols, but many intractable issues remain (information sharing, joint research, mechanisms for conflict resolution, new treaties and agreements, etc). The World Bank expects regional cooperation over shared rivers to be part of its policy dialogue with partner countries through the next decade.

5. Effective policy and regulatory framework

Thoroughly prepared policies matched by effective regulation are fundamental as a means of demonstrating government commitment and creating the enabling environment for integrated water resources management. With community management and private sector involvement as important components of the way ahead, government's regulatory role will need to be reformed.

6. Capacity building, utilization and retention

The emphasis here is on equipping all stakeholders to play their parts and, to start on using existing capacity to the full. Through their multisectoral plans, countries can determine ways of maximizing use of their own indigenous resources (human, financial and institutional) and identify effective ways in which donor support can be used to plug capacity gaps. Many countries emphasized at the Workshops that their existing capacities are underutilized.

7. New forms of country/donor partnership

The country-driven nature of development programs calls for a responsive approach from donors, working in partnership with government agencies and guided by nationally determined priorities.

These seven goals for the future constitute the road ahead for water resources decision-making in Sub-Saharan Africa. These are important goals that the countries should set for themselves to create the enabling environment for this emerging new agenda.

The New Agenda

The elements of the New Agenda reflect the continual affirmation at each Workshop of some now widely accepted common principles:

1. Integrated approach to water resources management

The old water agenda was supply-driven, engineering-based, single-sector, and usually involved only a single stakeholder. It was also materialistic and utilitarian.

2. Cooperation in WRM of shared rivers

Integrated river-basin planning and management are seen as a key element in national WRM strategies. They are equally valuable on international rivers, as a way of allocating water equitably and protecting ecosystems. Riparian states and donors need to seek ways to extend principles of stakeholder involvement, multisectoral planning and legislative reform into the international arena. The "win-win" scenario of mutual benefit from water sharing initiatives is one pointer to the way forward.

3. Partnership, integration, and pluralism

A number of countries have shown that commitment to stakeholder-driven policy development, with all partners having a voice and contributing resources, leads to more effective and sustainable programs. Examples include Sénégal, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

4. Water as a social and an economic good

Water pricing has always been a sensitive political issue. The Workshops generated interesting discussions on ways of achieving equitable use of available water supplies and ensuring the prime aim of extending services to the urban and rural poor, while at the same time recovering costs for operating existing projects and constructing new ones.

5. Health and environmental sustainability

Improving human health and safeguarding the environment are linked objectives which need to be integrated into water sector strategies.

6. Public awareness and indigenous knowledge

The benefits of stakeholder participation accrue when all sections of society are well-informed and empowered to contribute to program planning and can help to put societal interests alongside individual demands.

7. Gender sensitivity

The gender issue is not simply one of recognizing women as victims. Both men and women have vital roles to play--sometimes different roles. The aim has to be to use approaches which take gender issues into consideration as a way of making programs more effective.

Development Priorities

These countries' commitment to achieving sustainable management and use of their water resources needs to be backed by government-formulated programs which recognize and cater for the linkages and trade-offs among sectors. The choices spread across a range of development priorities.

1. Enhanced service coverage with priority for the poor

The African Advisory Group steered the Strategy Paper towards a focus on rural and peri-urban problems. Workshop discussions confirmed this emphasis on tackling the urgent needs of the poor.

2. Food security through irrigation and water harvesting

The potential for much more small-scale irrigation has been confirmed by several countries (for example, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Sahelian countries, Nigeria,

Tanzania, Kenya). World Bank analyses show that doubling the irrigated area used for growing cereal crops would produce enough extra food to meet needs up to the year 2025. Water harvesting is an attractive way of using low-cost technology to boost production from the 200 million hectares of land presently used for rain-fed agriculture in Africa.

3. Water quality and human health

Protecting water resources from pollution is important means of safeguarding precious current and future sources. It is also vital to combat the many threats to human health from contaminated water.

4. Protection of watersheds and wetlands

Land degradation has serious implications for water quality and quantity. Appropriate land management and catchment protection programs are an integral part of the river-basin approach.

5. Intercountry river-basin cooperation

Shared resources feature prominently in national WRM strategies in most African countries. Resources need to be assigned to the development of basin-wide agreements, which may involve sacrifices as well as gains.

Key Strategic Actions

The most powerful message emerging from the Workshops is that future water resources management strategies in Africa will be country-driven, making optimum use of indigenous resources and with external technical assistance limited to plugging capacity gaps identified by the countries. These key strategic actions have a common goal - sustainable and equitable use of water resources - and seven strategy elements:

1. Utilize and build local capacity and human resources

External support for capacity building will be responsive to country demands and will include institutional and human resources development involving all stakeholders, not just government agencies.

2. Develop knowledge and approaches through applied research

Applied research is crucial for countries and donor agencies with limited financial resources. Applied research should be demand-driven and based upon stakeholder input and participation.

3. Strengthen data/information systems

Needs include hydrological and other physical data

required for planning and monitoring programs, as well as social and economic data as a basis for multisectoral strategies and priority setting.

4. Involve all stakeholders and build awareness

A necessary condition for more efficient and lasting management of water resources is the participation of all stakeholders (public agencies, private sector, NGOs, local communities and special interests) in all aspects of decision making, planning and implementation. The challenge for African countries at this time is to involve local communities more fully in policy formulation and project design and execution. Public awareness campaigns and education initiatives can be important steps in building awareness among stakeholders.

5. Establish mechanisms for regional cooperation and conflict resolution

This may well be the biggest challenge for the region as a whole. Cooperation is going to involve trade-offs and income transfers for which no models are available as yet.

6. Support long-term national investment programs

African countries recognize the need to depart from a single-project approach, which has resulted in fragmentation and inefficiency in water utilization, and to develop long-term national programs for development and management of water resources. These national programs can be an important vehicle for mobilizing support of all stakeholders and for coordinating donor support.

7. Implement country-driven coordination

These last two elements are closely linked, as program-oriented approaches are a helpful way of coordinating donor activities at the country level, directed by the country itself.

Workshop Recommendations for Priority Action

Following analysis of five key issues by Working Groups, recommendations were developed under the same thematic headings:

Strategies and Investment Options

Governments and donors are in agreement that water resources management strategies need to be country-driven, making maximum use of indigenous resources and local capacity. Donor support should be responsive to the needs and priorities identified by the countries, minimizing the use of technical assistance.

Community management of water supplies for drinking and small-scale irrigation has been shown to be effective in rural areas. As well as improving the reliability and performance of the water services, community-level resource mobilization provides a major source of project financing. It needs to be introduced with a high level of stakeholder participation.

The degree to which privatization can improve institutional performance will vary from country to country. However, a more commercialized approach is a vital part of improving the performance of public service providers. Successful approaches have included private sector participation in large urban water supply and sewerage services and small commercialized public utilities at the district level.

Strategies with the twin objectives of equitable and environmentally sustainable development enable countries to extend water and sanitation services to the urban and rural poor in an affordable way, to provide water to increase food production, and to conserve water resources for future generations.

Capacity Utilization , Building and Retention

Exploitation of indigenous capacity and plugging of gaps through external support will be accompanied by incentives to retain qualified staff.

Support for the necessary decentralization will focus on establishing a commercialized approach in public sector agencies as well as seeking opportunities for privatization where appropriate.

Donors need to find innovative ways of building capacity not just in public sector agencies but in communities, NGOs, the private sector, farmers, and other water sector stakeholders. Capacity building is not a one-way process; the different stakeholders have much to teach governments and donors.

Special thought needs to be given to appropriate frameworks for continuing cooperation among riparian states. Intercountry exchange of African expertise and experience is both appropriate and cost-effective.

The overall aim is to create the right enabling environment for reaching the common goal of efficient and equitable water use through partnership. The right policy framework, backed by effective legislation, is the foundation for this enabling environment. Training and

education initiatives need to match identified needs.

Regional cooperation

In helping to resolve transboundary issues, donors need to look for mechanisms which will allow them to assist through multicountry interventions.

Conflicts can be resolved if “win-win” solutions can be found and an even playing field can be created, so that discussions are acknowledged to be among equals. International river-basin organizations need commitment and support from both governments and donors, if they are to achieve the desired objective.

Networking and information sharing among countries will help to stimulate water-sharing agreements. Informal get-togethers and formalized institutional arrangements both have parts to play in improving transboundary relationships. Cooperation can be further increased through joint (intercountry) projects, training and applied research programs, particularly those related to the management of shared resources.

Information and knowledge base

Information and data generation needs to be demand-driven and cost-effective. Restoration and improvement of hydrological networks and routine collection and updating of other physical data have to be accompanied by programs to assemble and analyze socioeconomic data.

Combination of physical and socioeconomic information can help to determine how social systems interact with natural ones. Thus, important planning information can be gathered on issues such as the effects of a transformation in land use on watershed degradation and the resulting impact on available water resources over different time horizons.

The strengthening of water information services and analytical methods will lead to multiple benefits, including improved planning, programming and monitoring; identification of opportunities for applied research; effective management of multipurpose projects; improved mitigation of droughts and floods; and more cost-effective and environmentally sound projects.

Raising awareness among all stakeholders is a vital part of building partnerships within countries, while regional and pan-African information sharing, both formal and informal, fosters enhanced intercountry cooperation.

Donor collaboration

Donors need to view their links with African countries not in the context of a provider-recipient relationship but as partnership based on mutual respect, in which solutions to problems come from both sides.

Countries can help to build the partnership by sharing information on national strategies and programs. Donors are committed to respecting national priorities and do not gain from being paternalistic.

The widely accepted multisectoral approach is a challenge for both countries and donors, which can be advanced significantly by regular dialogue and by networking among countries, among donors and in workshops and conferences.

By listening to the experiences and ideas emerging from stakeholders, donors can help to ensure that support is better tailored to national needs, taking account of indigenous capacity.

Donor project assessment should focus on the development impact of programs. Recognizing that donors are responsible to their governments and taxpayers and the Bank to its stockholders, there is scope for harmonization of approaches at the country level to match national goals and priorities.

Where do we go from here?

The Strategy Document is intended to shape the way that the World Bank does business in the water sector in Africa. The Workshop messages will influence country-assistance strategies and help the Bank to develop partnerships with countries and other donors.

The impact of the workshop is also expected to spread via the participants, fostering the stakeholder participation in strategy development that is seen as so important.

The partnership process needs to continue under African leadership, and future meetings will wish to review what has happened as a result of the Workshop recommendations. The concept of a Pan-African Partnership was widely debated at both Workshops, with the consensus in favor of an informal framework. The World Bank's African Advisory Group, which helped to steer development of the Strategy Paper, is to be asked to pursue ideas for such a partnership.

Attachment 1

African Water Resources Management: Beyond the Strategy Paper The African Advisory Group

In order to promote improved management of water resources at both the national and regional level, the World Bank's Africa Region has been developing a regional strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa since early 1994, through a participatory and consultative process, taking full account of the needs, priorities, and constraints of African countries. As part of this process, a strategy paper, *African Water Resources: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development*, has been prepared in cooperation with Senior Advisors¹ from nine African countries, who served as African Advisory Group (AAG) and undertook detailed reviews in 1994 and 1995. The draft Strategy was then reviewed in two sub-regional stakeholder workshops in Africa in February 1996. The Strategy has been widely endorsed and there was a strong call to maintain, through an informal framework, the dialogue on a wide range of issues, the exchange of experience, and the different coalitions that have emerged.

The momentum achieved in the preparation of and consultation of the Bank's Strategy needs to be maintained, and the call on the part of participants in the African Stakeholder Workshops for sustained dialogue requires action. In response, the AAG has agreed to become an ad-hoc Steering Group which will seek to consolidate and build existing partnerships toward a consultative group whose role would be to promote enhanced water resources management and facilitate "south-south: exchange of information, lessons, and experience. A Coordinator (Professor Mark Mujwahuzi of the University of Dar es Salaam) has been identified from within the AAG whose task will be to ensure contact between the different members.

In consultation with the Bank, the AAG will:

- redefine its membership, if appropriate, to ensure acceptable (but still manageable) representation from Sub-Saharan Africa;
- establish communication procedures;
- develop broad terms of reference, including defining objectives and a scope of work; and,
- define an outline program of activities for the next two years, leading to a second African Water Resources Management Forum or Conference.

On its part, the Bank will:

- seek funding for the AAG to communicate and to meet occasionally, as well as for an agreed work program;
- review and advise the AAG on its ToR and program of activities;
- participate in the AAG's program of activities whenever appropriate; and,
- meet with the AAG both collectively and individually when appropriate.

¹ Ahmend Adams (Sudan), Ni Boi Ayibotele (Ghana), Peter Heyns (Namibia), Mark Mujwahuzi (Tanzania), Margaret Mwangola (Kenya), Ndey-Isatou Njie (The Gambia), Olusegaun Obasanjo (Nigeria), Mamadou Sylla (Senegal), and Imeru Tamrat (Ethiopia).